The Nikos Kazantzakis Chair

Center for Modern Greek Studies
San Francisco State University

Μαντατοφόρος*

ΕΔΡΑ ΝΙΚΟΥ ΚΑΖΑΝΤΖΑΚΗ

Modern Greek Studies Foundation

Spring, 1996 *MANDATOPHOROS: Bearer of news, messenger Vol. 12, No. 2

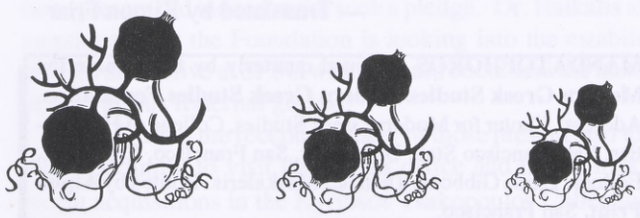
Odysseas Elytis (1911-1996)

Nobel Laureate, 1979

When a great poet dies in Greece, the Greek people feel a sudden eclipse of light and song across their land and seas. In the case of **Odysseas Elytis,** "the poet of sun and sea", the eclipse is particularly stunning. No Greek poet in the last half century has sung the Greek world as exultantly as Elytis has. In his lyrical sweep all essential elements of Greece and of Hellenism — sunlight, sea, historical destiny, struggles of the people — merge in a magnificent song; every part of the Greek landscape and of Greek life receives lyrical glorification — a hymn that it deserves, **because it is worthy** (***axion esti***).

With earlier national poets (**Solomos, Palamas, Sikelianos, Seferis, Ritsos**) the work remained, after the poets passing, to inspire and guide the Greek people and to bolster Hellenism. It is hoped that in our days, when cultures rush inexorably forward — away from past voices and springs of tradition — the eclipse of song and light will be brief; that the inheritors of Hellenism will continue to hear the ressurrectional lyricism of Elytis, for what "is worthy" must not be forgotten, must not be lost.

—Th. M.



Dr. Martha Klironomos
The Modern Greek Studies torch is passed on

New Modern Greek Studies Faculty at SFSU

Dr. Martha Klironomos was just appointed by San Francisco State University as Assistant Professor of Modern Greek Studies in the Department of Comparative Literature. Dr. Klironomos holds a Joint Honours B.A. in English and Classics (with specialization in Modern Greek) and an M.A. in English from McGill University and a Ph.D. in English literature from the Ohio State University. Even though her Ph.D. is in English, she was able to specialize in Greek modernist literature through course work, general examination preparation and doctoral dissertation research.

During 1993-94, she went on to enhance her scholarly expertise in Modern Greek literature and intellectual history as a Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada Postdoctoral Fellow at the George Seferis Chair of Modern Greek Studies at Harvard University.

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ODYSSEAS ELYTIS (1911-1996)

Anniversary

...even the weariest river
winds somewhere safe to sea.

I brought my life this far
To this spot that struggles
Always near the sea
Youth on rocks, breast
To breast against the wind
Where a man may go
Who is nothing else but a man
Summing up his green moments
With coolness, the visions of his hearing
With waters, his remorses with wings
Ah, Life
Of a child who becomes a man
Always near the sea when the sun
Teaches him to breathe toward that place where
The shadow of a seagull vanishes.

I brought my life this far
White summation, black total
A few trees and a few
Wet pebbles
Light fingers to caress a forehead
What forehead
Anticipations wept all night and are no more
There is no one
That a free footstep might be heard
That a voice may dawn refreshed
That sterns may splash by quays, inscribing
A name of deeper azure on their horizon
A few years, a few waves
Sensitive rowing
In the bays surrounding love.

I brought my life this far
Bitter gash in the sand that will vanish
— Whoever saw two eyes touching his silence
And mingled with their sunlight enclosing a thousand worlds
Let him remind other suns of his blood
Closer to the light
There is a smile that pays for the flame
But here in this ignorant landscape that fades away
In an open and pitiless sea
Success moults
Whirlwind of feathers
And of moments that have become attached to the earth
Hard earth under the soles of impatient feet
Earth made for vertigo
A dead volcano.

I brought my life this far
A stone pledge to the watery element
Further off than the islands
Lower than the waves
In the neighborhood of anchors
— When keels pass by, splitting some new obstacle
With passion and conquer it
And hope is resplendent with all its dolphins
The sun's gain in a human heart —
The nets of doubt draw up
A figure of salt
Carved with effort
Indifferent, white
That turns toward the sea the void of its eyes
Upholding infinity.

— Translated by Kimon Friar

From *The Axion Esti*

ΣΤΗΝ ΑΡΧΗ τὸ φῶς Καὶ ἡ ὥρα ἡ πρώτη
πού τὰ χείλη ἀκόμη στὸν πηλὸ
δοκιμάζουν τὰ πράγματα τοῦ κόσμου

IN THE BEGINNING the light And the first hour
when lips still in clay
try out the things of the world

Drinking The Corinthian Sun

Drinking the Corinthian sun
Reading the marble ruins
Striding over vineyard seas
Aiming with my harpoon
At votive fish that elude me
I found those leaves that the psalm of the sun memorizes
The living land that desire rejoices
To open

I drink water, cut fruit
Plunge my hands through the wind's foliage
Lemon trees quicken the pollen of summer days
Green birds cut through my dreams
And I leave, my eyes filled
With a boundless gaze where the world becomes
Beautiful again from the beginning according to the heart's measure.

— Translated by Kimon Friar

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President of Greece Visits Bay Area

On May 11, **Constantinos Stephanopoulos, the President of the Republic of Greece,** will be arriving in San Francisco for a two-day visit—making this the first time an elected Greek Chief of State has ever visited the West Coast. **The Honorable Willie Brown,** mayor of San Francisco, will welcome the President upon his arrival at the San Francisco Airport.

On Sunday, May 12, President Stephanopoulos will address the Greek American community following a 10:00 A.M. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in the **Cathedral of the Ascension** in Oakland (2400 Lincoln Ave.). **The Right Rev. Anthony,** Bishop of San Francisco, will officiate at the liturgy. After the service, a reception will be held in the Ascension Community Center. The public is invited to the service and the reception.

MGSF Hosts a Reception for Bay Area Greek American Organizations

On Sunday, March 31, the **Modern Greek Studies Foundation** honored a number of local Greek American fraternal organizations for their financial support of the **Center for Modern Greek Studies at SFSU**. In the last ten years these groups have donated more than $25,000 to underwrite courses, sponsor lectures and special programs, and augment the Kazantzakis Chair endowment. As part of the program preceding the reception, **Dr. George Daskarolis**, Foundation Board member, gave a talk on early San Francisco Greek newspapers and their publishers. One of the goals of the Foundation for this year is to expand the file of local newspapers in the collections of the Library at SFSU. Following the Daskarolis talk, **Dr. Peter Haikalis**, MGSF 1st Vice President acknowledged the individual organizations for their beneficence and urged them to continue this tradition of support for the Center. In addition to underwriting courses and sponsoring special events, Dr. Haikalis suggested that the fraternal organizations consider making a five year commitment as Friends of the Center for Modern Greek Studies at the $250 level or above. At the conclusion of the program members from one of the organizations present did indeed make such a pledge. Dr. Haikalis also mentioned that the Foundation is looking into the establishment of an archive at SFSU which would document the history of the various fraternal groups.

During the reception many of those present also took the opportunity to visit the Center office and take a look at recent acquisitions in the Kyriakos Tsakopoulos Collection.

New Modern Greek Studies Faculty,

...cont'd from pg. 1

She has been teaching as an Assistant Professor of Modern Greek at McGill since 1994 where she has been offering introductory level modern Greek language courses and two interdisciplinary seminars she had been asked to design specifically for the Modern Greek Program in which she incorporates modern Greek literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in translation.

Dr. Klironomos' tenure-track appointment begins with the Fall 1996 semester in late August. She will be teaching Modern Greek language and literature courses. Her position includes directing the Center for Modern Greek Studies, following my tenure at the Center/Nikos Kazantzakis Chair.

This appointment is very important for our Modern Greek Studies Program since, for the first time, it provides a position entirely in Modern Greek Studies. Developing the program into an interdisciplinary major and augmenting the Kazantzakis Chair Endowment are among the priorities of the Center for the next few years. Increased outreach cultural activities in the Greek American and in the greater community are also in our immediate plans.

I am very pleased to welcome Martha Klironomos to the Center/Kazantzakis Chair —and to pass the Modern Greek Studies torch to her.

—Thanasis Maskaleris

Presidents/Officers of the Hellenic Fraternal Societies and The District Governor of Ahepa. From left: **Ana Maria Dimitratos-Horta, *HAPS*, Dimitri Charalambous, *Dynamis*, Titika Koplos, *UHAS*, George Konstantopoulos, *UHAS*, George Booras, *Ahepa-District Governor*, Marios Stathopoulos, *Ahepa*, Nick Polyzos, *Roumeli*, Dina Kourumalos, *Cephalonians*, Athanasios Kastoras, *Messinians*, John Bardis, *Arcadians*, Theodore Mezinis, *Epiros Society, of Northern California.***

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Modern Greek Studies Fall Courses

GRE 250 **Beginning Modern Greek I**
Instructor: *Effie Kalafatis* HUM 579
Mondays & Wednesdays 2:10-3:30 P.M.

GRE 365 **Intermediate Modern Greek III**
Instructor: *Martha Klironomos* HUM 381
Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:35-1:50 P.M.

WCL 445 **Modern Greek Literature**
Instructor: *Martha Klironomos* HUM 212
Wednesdays 6:00-8:45 P.M.

Classes for the Fall semester begin **August 28, 1996.** Individuals from the community are encouraged to attend the above courses. For information, call the Center for Modern Greek Studies at (415) 338-1892.

Join us today — your support would be greatly appreciated!

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